

THE PORT OF MASSOWAH, FROM THE MAINLAND.

ENGRAVED BY A. NEGRI.

NEGUS NEGUSTI, AND THE ABYSSINIANS.

WITH PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR.



A WARRIOR EATING.

WHEN Gordon Pasha was shut up in Khar-toum, and the Egyptian garrisons in the eastern Soudan were menaced by the Mahdi's fanatical followers, the British and Khedival governments deemed it advisable to send a pacific mission to King Johannes of Abyssinia, to enlist the favor and assistance of the Ethiopian monarch, in the evacuation by the garrisons and Christian inhabitants of the several Egyptian towns bordering on the Abyssinian frontier then threatened by the Soudanese, and to allow them to pass unmolested through his territories to the coast.

Sir William Hewitt had been appointed the English envoy for this purpose, and the campaign against Osman Digna having lulled for a while, there was a general rush of war-correspondents for this opportunity of writing up and illustrating an almost unknown region. So many wished to accompany the mission that the British admiral was compelled to refuse all the applicants. Hearing of this fact, I would not appear before him to face a refusal, and I flattered myself that, not having applied, I was free by some other means to try to accompany the mission through this

wonderfully interesting and almost inaccessible country. I hurried by the first steamer from Suakim to Massowah, the port from which the mission was to start inland, and I immediately called on the governor, an American gentleman who had been for years in the service of the Khedive, and was now the envoy deputed by the Egyptians for Abyssinia. To his good nature I am indebted for one of the most delightful and interesting journeys I have ever undertaken.

Mason Bey, on hearing of my great desire to accompany the mission, at once attached me to his staff. Before the sun had set on the day of my arrival, I was ensconced in the palace as a sort of under-secretary, with free use of the Bey's larder, cellar, and cheroot-box.

On the afternoon of Monday, April 7, 1884, the flagships and forts of Massowah thundered a salute, as the Admiral landed and was received by Mason Bey at the palace stairs. In less than an hour the mission started on its adventurous journey. Before we had quitted the plains of Monkolu the sun had passed away, and as we began to struggle over the rough, undulating ground toward the Abyssinian chain of mountains, a deep, yellow gloom suffused the sky. But this soon gave way to the powerful but mellow light of the African moon, which was now casting long shadows of our men and beasts over the silver sand. Here and there the moonbeams lighted up in ghastly distinctness some wild Arab warrior, peering at us in curiosity from the bush along the road. A few miles farther, and the route turned abruptly to the right, and gradually began to narrow into the bed of a dried-up watercourse. We were now within a short distance of Saahti, our intended halting-place for the night.

Presently, a few hundred yards in front of us, some white tents stood boldly out in the moonlight. To our surprise we found cooking-fires blazing, and an evening meal already pre-

pared for us. A good friend had arrived in advance of our party, pitched tents, and prepared a sumptuous repast. We owed all this courtesy to a gay old slave-dealer, who had recently given up dealing in live stock in favor of dead, which he sold in the shape of butcher-meat to the various steamers coming into the port of Massowah. I had seen this gentleman at the beginning of our journey, doubled up on a small donkey, and dressed in his ordinary fashionable attire, a light pink stuff gabardine, with yellow silk-embroidered sash bound round

test we had yet experienced. Many of us were compelled to swathe our heads in wet towels to lessen the chance of sunstroke. In the afternoon of the second day an officer with twenty men, sent down from the mountains by Balata Gubru, a frontier chief, arrived in camp for the purpose of taking over the king's presents, and of relieving our bashi-bazouk guard, which now returned to Massowah. At sunrise the following morning we moved in a southerly direction, skirting the Ailet hills along a mule-path, through mimosa woods teeming with



ENGRAVED BY F. W. SUTHERLAND.

THE PALACE, MASON BEV'S RESIDENCE, MASSOWAH.

his waist. His face, almost cadaverous in its contour, was framed by a white bullion-fringed turban; his eyes were sparkling; and a sinister smile played about his lips.

Though our camping-ground was at least four hundred feet above the plains, yet there was no perceptible difference in the temperature. The thermometer was steady at something like ninety throughout the night. An hour before sunrise we struck camp, bade farewell to our gallant host, and started for Ailet. We soon began to experience rough traveling. Immediately on leaving Saathi, the aspect of the country changed. The ground was strewn with huge granite boulders, and here and there patches of stunted mimosa or wild olive-trees broke our route. Always ascending, moving over chains of low hills, we kept to the dried-up watercourse, the bed of which so narrowed that it was difficult for us to make our way even in Indian file. The sun beat down upon our little caravan, making life almost unbearable. Occasionally we would be fanned by a slight breeze as we surmounted some ridge, from which the sight of the floating vapors still clinging to the faint blue peaks of the distant mountains cheered us with the fact that we were slowly though surely approaching a country of cool shades and running waters. Scorching sun, burning rocks, and shadeless mimosa-bushes held their own till we arrived at the wells of Ailet.

Our day's rest at Ailet was one of the hot-

game. We halted for the night at Sabagumba, where our guns found plenty of quail to embellish the evening meal. An hour before dawn found us ascending the Rara Pass, and at mid-day we camped in the narrow valley of Genda. Our mules had not had so happy a grazing-place for many a day. The ground was covered with wild clover, fine grass, and buttercups. A brook wound its way down the valley, sprawling over rocky beds, and hemmed in by tall grasses. Our sportsmen were soon busy on the sloping sides of the valley, thick with foliage and full of guinea-fowl. We remained in this happy place for one day, awaiting the arrival of the lieutenant of the Abyssinian chief Ras Alula. This officer came about midday, with an escort of a hundred ragged-looking fellows clothed in cotton knee-breeches, with togas in various stages of dirt slung about their shoulders. While a few were mounted on mules, the majority tramped on foot, armed with spears, swords, and muskets ranging from the first specimens of that arm to the modern Remington. There was no discipline or order with these warriors. They herded together in groups, or lounged about camp in pairs, staring and gazing at us in the rudest curiosity. Their leader, a short, spare man, with narrow face and close, cunning eyes, was a person of some distinction. He told us that Alula anxiously awaited our coming, that he was deputed to act as our guide through the passes to his chief's camp, which had been pitched on the plateau of

Asmara, seven thousand feet straight up the mountain.

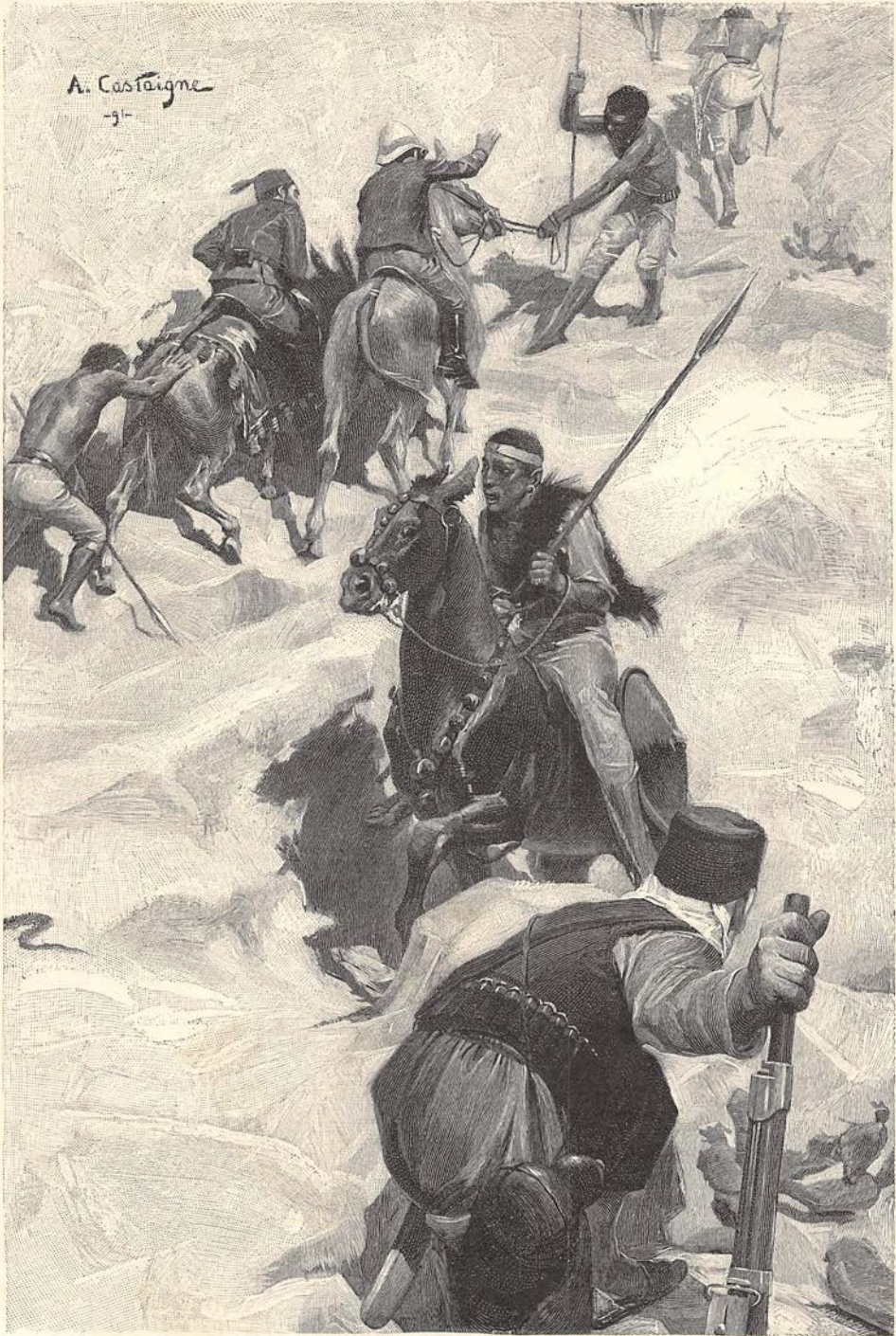
The next day we entered on the most serious part of our journey. Our first few miles lay through mountainous scenery reminding me a little of our own Scotch Highlands, and still more of the Turkish Balkans. Birches, cedars, acacia- and box-trees, many rare orchids, and strange plants covered the sides of the gorges. Common flowers were in profusion; maiden-hair ferns and lichens brushed us as we toiled on our way. Some of the guard in our front played upon pipes roughly made out of the bark of trees. The notes, sweet and mellow, seemed to start all the birds on our route into song. Climbing up almost perpendicular passes a thousand feet or more, skirting for a time a rocky precipice, we suddenly emerged into a narrow valley, the aspect of which was unlike any we had yet seen. The whole foliage of this part of the mountain was totally unlike that a few yards below us. It seemed to have changed as if by magic, so unexpected was the transformation from European delicacy to African crudeness of color—the *Euphorbia candelabra gigantea*, bursting into bloom with clusters of red and yellow blossom; enormous aloes in flower; and cacti parasites clinging to the rocks, or trailing in great luxuriance from the trees. The sun, which had been shaded from us by the dense foliage below, now blazed out in all its fierceness, flooding the fantastic valley with a brilliancy that was superb and almost overpowering.

Next day we arrived at the foot of our last, but most difficult, ascent. The Maiensi Pass is one of the steepest routes for the passage of human beings to be found on the globe. It was utterly impossible to ride our horses up it; so we were compelled to take to our mules, and we had to nurse even these hardy little brutes nearly the whole way. A shower of stones clattering down upon us discovered a horseman scampering toward our party from the mouth of the pass above. Saluting the Admiral, the messenger told him that the Ras (governor), his master, had seen us coming, and thus early sent his greeting. The route now narrowing into a rocky defile, we suddenly emerged on the great Abyssinian plateau. As this new world dawned upon us, the slight eminence on our right became alive with moving horsemen: at least fifteen hundred cavalry began to spread out over the plains in our front. At a given signal they turned sharply, facing our party, then charged with seeming fury straight at us. They were all fierce-looking men, with headgear of handkerchiefs of various colors, or simply a wide white tape tied round their close curly hair, after the fashion of the ancient Romans. Some sported lion-manes, which, fringing their dusky

faces, made them look almost as savage as that beast himself. Skins of black leopard, over their red and white togas, swathed their bodies. As with couched spears and uplifted targets they bore down upon us, they yelled like maniacs, madly shaking their weapons in mock defiance; and when within a few paces, with one accord they suddenly curbed their horses. So quickly was this done that their chargers reeled back on their haunches; each warrior at the same time lowering the point of his spear, and in silence bowing his body before the envoys. Then afar off from over the plain came the sound of drums slowly beaten. The horsemen, wheeling round our flank, now formed an irregular line in our rear.

When the cloud of dust that for a moment enveloped us cleared away, we discovered far ahead, on a rocky height standing out of the plain, a solitary white tent; on each side of it, sloping down to the plain, lines of infantry were drawn up, forming a broad avenue through which our party advanced. As we slowly moved between the lines of these dusky footmen, the drums deeply sounded an Amharic greeting, the interpretation of which was: "How do you do? How do you do?"

The bright sunlight shimmering on the silver bolts of the circular shields of the horsemen, and on the metal-plated trappings of their chargers; glittering on the myriads of spear-heads; brightening up the motley coloring of their headgear and red-striped togas; and, above all, the measured beating of the deep-toned kettle-drums, greeting us in this odd fashion, made our first reception in Abyssinia a highly impressive one. The envoys dismounted a few paces in front of Alula's tent. That great chief walked forward, and shook them heartily by the hand. Ras Alula was a man of five-and-forty, of medium stature, with massive head, close-shaven face, and features somewhat Roman in type but almost as black as a negro's. This Roman resemblance was suggested even more by a toga thrown gracefully about his figure, giving him the appearance of a statue of the great Cæsar worked in bronze. But all this majesty was soon dispelled as he squatted on his throne and began gesticulating. The continued clutching at his drapery, the swaying of his body, and the long curved sword shaking out behind from the folds of his toga, gave the great Amharic chief more the appearance of a chimpanzee. The reception was cordial, but not effusive. Repeating the questions the drums were still asking: "How do you do? How do you do?" we in answer said, "Very well, thank you; and how are you?" Alula slowly replied, "Thank you, I am well." But to our anxious inquiries as to when and where we would meet the King, the Ras was very



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE, FROM A SKETCH BY FREDERIC VILLIERS.

ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

UP THE MAIENSI PASS.

reticent, giving us an answer worthy of a European diplomatist. He said, "Only God and his Majesty know that." We then retired till our sable friend should become more communicative.

Asmara, where we camped for a time with Alula, is a village of at least 2000 inhabitants. The houses are built of stone, and are circular in form, with thatched, extinguisher-shaped roofs. Its church is also of the same material, and is highly decorated with crude pictures of the Virgin and Child, the apostles and saints. Before the sun left the plateau, presents came into camp, and Abyssinian hospitality began. Grain, chopped straw, thin cakes of unleavened bread, jars of honey, and horns of tedge, with two or three beeves and some black sheep, were the gifts for the day. The next morning we unpacked our presents for Alula and his lieutenant, Gabru. To the great chief we presented shot-guns, rifles, ammunition, and accoutrements, some pieces of silk, a carpet, and a Turkish ewer and basin, in brass—the latter not a reflection on his lack of ablution, for he was the cleanest native we had yet met. Gabru received a rifle, a carpet, and some whisky—the last-mentioned gift being more in accord with his taste than the ewer and basin, for we had our suspicions that he would have made a shield of the basin, and a jar for alcoholic drink of the ewer.

At sunrise on the third day of our advent into Abyssinia, we began our journey across the great table-land to Adowa, escorted by Alula with his whole army. The infantry in irregular masses ran on in advance; the cavalry in rough formations moved in our rear. As we journeyed at a quick walking-pace, the stream of foot-soldiers in our front was augmented by stragglers who had been billeted in the adjacent villages. At a nod from Ras Alula, who rode on the right hand of the envoys, the cavalry would send forth warriors galloping from each flank to do mimic battle with one another for our amusement, showing their dexterity with lance or saber, each man seemingly fighting desperately, trying to gain a smile of approbation from his chief. The nearer we approached Addi Techlai, Alula's permanent camp, the warmer grew the mimic fight; the warriors being stimulated by the sight of their women watching their prowess from the heights. A few hot-headed youths used their swords in earnest, and blood began to flow; but a signal from the Ras stopped further mischief, and, the rough sport coming to an end, the horsemen rejoined in our rear. Suddenly, without any perceptible orders, the cavalry broke into a gallop, and in a cloud

of dust raced one another to the camp, struggling up the rocky and almost perpendicular height on which stood the stronghold, three hundred feet above us.

The following day we said good-by for a time to Ras Alula, and started *en route* for Adowa. Traveling in a southerly direction, we left the Ras's stronghold on our left rear. Our route lay through roughly plowed patches of ground, between low, rocky hills, from which Addi Techlai, though impregnable to primitive modes of attack, could be made untenable by means of modern artillery.

In this part of the country our surgeon was kept busy with many operations. He had just extracted a stone bullet which had been in a man's foot for two years. The patient showed his gratitude by bringing in some cakes and honey. With the exception of a few cow-doctors and herbalists, these poor people are without medical aid. Disease is rampant everywhere, consumption prevailing; scrofula and other loathsome complaints come next. Seven out of every ten persons have some kind of disease that shows itself in sores and eruptions. No doubt their excessive dislike for water is one of the principal causes. The fashions of the women's headgear are various, and do not differ much



LAME CHILD.

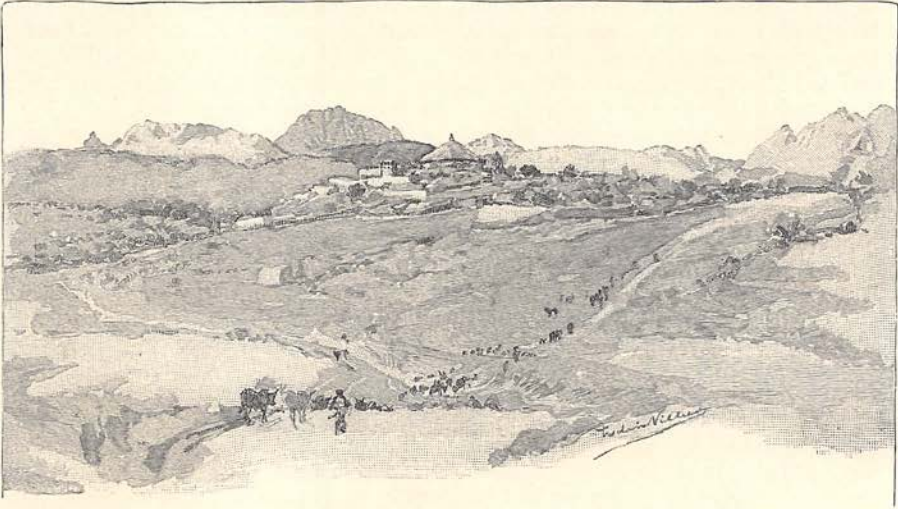
ENGRAVED BY J. NAYLOR.

from the mode of the men. The hair is worn short and curly, or in thin plaits taken from the forehead back over the cranium in corduroy fashion to the nape of the neck, where it narrows and is fixed up in a knot. Young girls will shave their scalps close, leaving a halo of fringe, perhaps terminating in loose streamers behind. This fashion is indeed very pretty, especially when framing handsome faces, which are by no means uncommon in Abyssinia. Drapery thrown about their well-shaped figures (worn

when their gowns are in rags) makes them absolutely statuesque, and these damsels would be attractive but for the nasal as well as the optical knowledge of their uncleanliness. An Ethiopian will tell you without a blush that he is necessarily washed at birth, cleans himself on his marriage morn, and hopes to be washed

The men are partial to cartridges, and some had a vague idea of their value, offering an egg apiece for them.

One morning we passed a caravan of ivory; the tusks were bound with rawhide and strapped across the backs of mules, who staggered under their precious loads toward



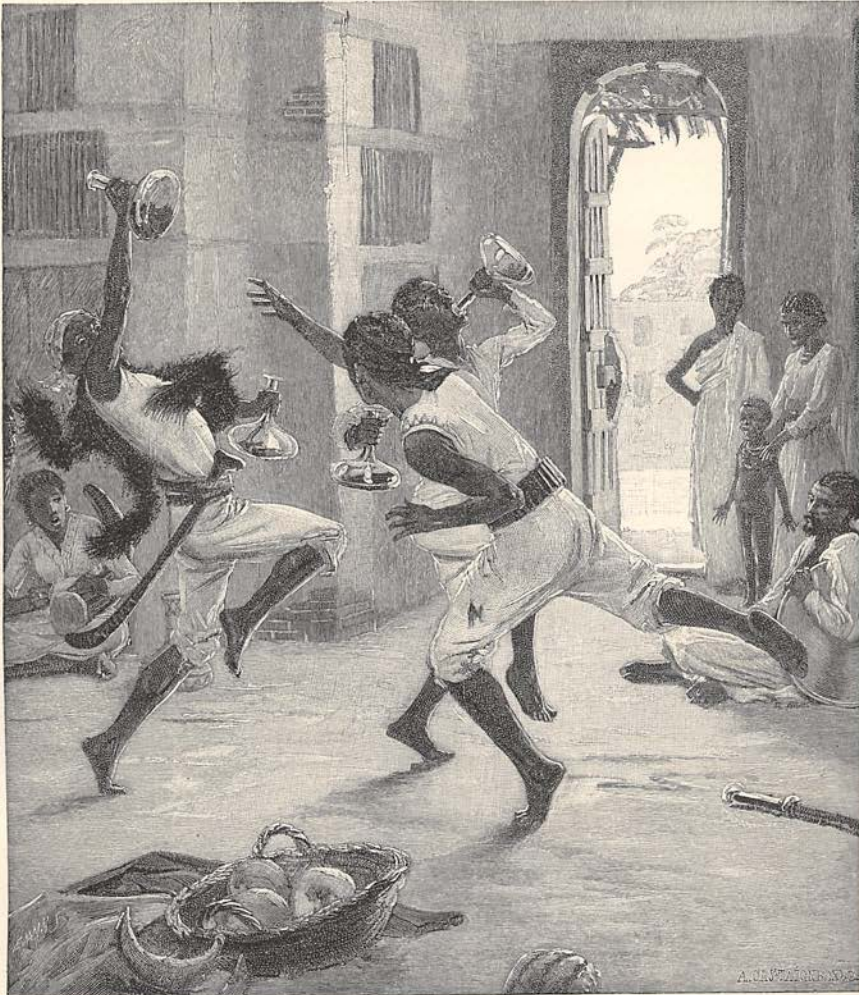
THE TOWN OF ADOWA, FROM THE SOUTH.

ENGRAVED BY K. C. ATWOOD.

after death; that once every year he dips himself in the river on the festival of St. John the Baptist, and regularly every morning he wets the end of his toga with the moisture from his mouth and freshens up his eyes. Whenever he feels his hide harsh and uncomfortable, he anoints himself with mutton fat. Of a morning one may see the *jeunesse dorée* of a town stalking with body erect, and with about a pound of butter stuck on their heads, gradually melting under the increasing power of the sun. The men may look a shade cleaner occasionally, caused not by any act of their own, but through the accident of being for hours in a rain-storm, which at this season occurs daily; but even then the odor of rancid mutton fat impregnates the atmosphere wherever they may be.

In passing through the town of Godafallassi, a place of 350 houses, and boasting a market, we had some hopes of finding the inhabitants in better circumstances and condition. They were in even a worse state than the people of the villages we had passed through. They herded together in their huts with their cattle, fowls, dogs, cats, and a Noah's ark of insects, which they seem to foster with the greatest care, by not touching soap and using very little water. They were more or less civil, but show no particular courtesy to strangers. They preferred cloth or gaudily colored handkerchiefs to money for the coarse food they brought us.

Asmara, *en route* for the market of Massowah. On arriving on the edge of the plateau, a scene of great beauty presented itself. Our route lay down a wide gorge, opening on an ocean of little blue hills, looking with their purple hues like the wavelets of the Atlantic suddenly arrested in motion. Descending the precipitous sides of the plateau, a crowd of monkeys of all sizes and ages scampered away in great dismay, chattering and shrieking as some of our sportsmen fired in the air. The valley of Gundet, which we were now traversing, became famous by the utter rout of the Egyptians in their fight with the Abyssinians in November, 1876. Here the main body of the invaders, under the gallant young Dane, Colonel Arendrup Bey, was cut to pieces. Further on, toward the Mareb River, the vanguard under Count Zichy left their bones to rot in a forest of mimosa. As we passed this scene, their bleached remnants still lay scattered there, marking the spot where a rallying square had stood to stem the torrent of Abyssinian spearmen, who suddenly rushed down upon them from their rocky cover of enormous granite boulders that hemmed in the defile. Remaining a little in the rear of our party, one of our native guard described to me the manner of the attack: how the Ethiopians crept from their cover on hands and knees; the surprise of the enemy; the short struggle and sub-



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE, FROM A SKETCH BY FREDERIC VILLIERS.

ENGRAVED BY J. W. EVANS.

THE DANCE OF THE GROOMSMEN, ADOWA.

sequent flight of the Egyptians, and their utter annihilation. The natives acknowledge to this day that Arendrup's troops fought dearly for their lives. In those days the Egyptians had some mettle in them. The battle of Gundet is memorable, as it was the beginning of the decay of Egyptian power in Ethiopia and the Soudan. Disorder and misfortune have overwhelmed them ever since, and the Turk, who was once regarded with fear and respect, is now looked upon in that part of the world with loathing and contempt. In the valley of Gundet the foliage varies from the monotony of the prickly mimosa to sycamore, butternut, and wild fig of many kinds, and on the banks of the Mareb weeping willows overhang its rocky bed.

Leaving this historical valley, we once more ascended hill after hill covered with dense fo-

liage, and here and there on their slopes were clearings with patches of cultivated ground. Always ascending, we at last reached the great Dari Teelai plain, one day's march from Adowa, our objective point. After traversing a sandy track for six hours, we encamped, but spent the last night of our long march in sleeplessness, on account of the cries of hyenas and jackals, and were made miserable by the visitations of spiders and scorpions, two of the party being severely bitten. In the early dawn we marched for the capital of northern Abyssinia. This last day's journey was considered by some of us the most difficult and trying of all. A magnificent view of the valleys and hills we had passed over in the last six days lay before us. A more picturesque but wild, inhospitable, and rugged-looking country one could hardly imagine. In the far distance, forming the hori-

zon, in a long level line lay the top of the Hamasen plateau. At the base of its precipitous sides stretched the valley of Gundet. Then a sea of hills piled up until they sloped into the plains of the Dari Teelai, the end of which was shut in by the numerous heights over which we had just toiled. On right and left of the plateau, the valley, and the plains,

merous villages, in such odd places and close proximity as to suggest the probability of their once being part and parcel of the city itself. The pillage, massacre, and incendiarism of hostile or rebellious tribes, which on an average take place every ten years, have doubtless left these remnants of happier days quite isolated, giving the Abyssinian capital a most poor



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE, FROM A SKETCH BY FREDERIC VILLIERS.

MOURNING HER BABY.

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER.

rugged mountains reared themselves in volcanic confusion, their shapes so eccentric that they seemed to mingle with the thunder-clouds that were beginning to discharge their waters in a distant valley. Reluctantly turning our backs on this grand and impressive scene, we descended into the valley of Adowa. On one of the slopes far away to our left, from out the gray monotony of surrounding habitations, shone the golden Coptic cross on the hay-thatched cathedral of the city of Adowa.

The capital of Tigré, or northern Abyssinia, appears to have been once a city of much greater importance than it is at the present day. It consists of 800 or 900 habitations, covering the spurs of three hills on the southeast end of the valley, around which are scattered nu-

and disjointed appearance for a representative city. As soon as we crossed the Mareb we found that the peasantry treated our advent with great indifference, and were very reluctant, in spite of excellent pay, to bring in supplies to our camp. This was owing, we discovered, to our arrival in the district belonging to the King's son — our powerful protector, Ras Alula, having no control out of his own country, though he was one of the most powerful of the Abyssinian chiefs, and the warden of the marches. The country is split up into petty chieftainships, the ruler of each district receiving all revenues from whatever sources, and having complete power of life and death over his people. His only obligation to the King is to follow him to war with all his available fight-

ing-men. Next to the King, Alula had the largest following, so Johannes had a wholesome respect for him, for his weight thrown in with any one of the pretenders to the throne would be a serious matter for the reigning house. The young heir apparent, jealous of the power of this great chief, resented it by showing to us that he alone had control in his own-district, and made us suffer by withholding the necessary supplies. So far was this jealousy carried, that on our arrival in Adowa the governor of the city delayed calling upon us, and when he condescended to do so was so drunk and stupid that he had to be supported by his interpreter on the road home. He forbade his people to bring us any supplies. This was, indeed, a very serious thing, for travelers in Abyssinia are dependent in this matter upon the pleasure of the governor or chiefs. In Adowa there are no shops or hostels of any description, the people getting their provisions from the market held once a week. Tedge and beer are brewed, corn is converted into flour, and all cooking prepared in each household. Therefore, unless people are allowed to sell or give hospitality, the traveler's chance of escape from starvation is a small one. We had supplies of a certain kind with us, and could have held out a few days, but such food would have been rejected by our native followers, who would have suffered great privations. Sir William Hewitt was compelled, therefore, to forward a letter to the King, stating that unless the prohibition of supplies was withdrawn, it would be impossible for us to move farther. In a few days a reply was brought back by Alula, who had been summoned by the King, which showed the pride and arrogance of the Ethiopian Christian monarch. The translation is as follows:

Message of King John, by the Almighty King of Zion.

May it reach Sir William Hewitt, commanding ships of war in the East India Station. How do you do? Thank God, I and my army are quite well. I am taking some baths. I send you Ras Alula to assist you in counsel, provisions, and everything. As your Excellency is going to make friendship between two kingdoms, don't be in a hurry to go back. I will come soon.

Written this 24th day of Mengared, Camp Dubba.

With the exception of Ras Alula, who was a man of courteous manner and no mean ability, the chiefs and officers, though receiving suitable presents, according to their rank, from our hands, would also try to obtain money from us under all kinds of pretenses, we knowing perfectly well that a refusal meant petty delays and difficulties in supplies. Even a chief of very high standing would ask for dollars with-

out any apparent shame, and if the amount of the gift did not come up to his expectations, he would politely say, "I require nothing but your friendship," which meant that he would be as unfriendly as possible until the required sum was forthcoming. The King might have put a stop to it at once, for no monarch is more absolute or despotic in the world. His word, proclaimed in the market-place with a prelude of tom-toms, is the only law, and he has absolute power of death and mutilation. Political offenders and obstructionists are arrested, chained, and placed on the small table-land of Abba Salama, a high, rocky, and precipitous mountain about thirty miles from Adowa. So sheer and steep are its sides that the prisoners are drawn up by ropes. Their chance of escaping is impossible, unless they run the risk of dashing themselves into eternity on the rocks below. On this lonely height there is soil on which they may grow grain, and there are wells with good water. There is no speaker to keep order, and they may, if they choose, abuse the prime ministers and crowned heads to their hearts' content, but they return no more to the ways of the world.

The King of the Ethiopians, although absolute in power, and doing pretty much as he pleases, has an ear for the Church, and superstitiously follows the fiat of the high priests. Within a stone's-throw of Adowa is a village called the Abuna's. It is here that the Archbishop, or Abuna, resides. This ecclesiastical dignitary is always a foreigner. The Abuna is simply a prisoner in the country, and, unless followed by his brother churchmen, he may not leave the precincts of his village, a jealous eye being kept on all his movements. He has the sole power of consecrating churches, and of ordaining priests and deacons, and holds over the heads of the people the sentence of excommunication, which is looked upon by all with the greatest dread. By these means, in many crooked ways, he can amass money, and perhaps eventually return to his native monastery should the vigilance of his guards be slackened. The Tchege comes next, and is the native head of the church. He and the Abuna should lead a life of rigid celibacy. The priests are allowed to marry if they choose, but the majority lead a life of gross immorality. The confessional affords an easy means for gratifying their desires, and also for obtaining the liquor that cheers. The Church in this country is almost as profitable a profession as that of the soldier. There is no regular pay attached to either, but the followers of both live upon the people. There is no encouragement to ambition or advancement, for as soon as a man begins to grow rich, he is robbed spiritually by one and materially by the other.

We found the walls of the churches in Abyssinia covered with pictures of scriptural history, and the walls of the cathedral with the exploits of Johannes. His victories over the Egyptians at Gorra, and in the valley of Gundet, are fully represented in tones as florid as those of advertising posters at home. The native artist does not make up for crudeness of color by the accuracy of his drawing, and if these pictures have any merit it is in their originality of treatment. For instance, in the cathedral of Gundet, in a picture representing the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, Pharaoh carries in his right hand the latest specimen in six-shooters, and in his left he holds a pair of opera-glasses, while the Egyptian host sport Remington rifles. All movement of figures is from right to left, and in all pictures heads are full-faced, with the exception of Satan and the hated Egyptians, who are painted in acute profile, to show their lack of honesty and good faith, and their inability to look you straight in the face. It is a deplorable fact, and one which, ladies will say at once, only proves the ignorance and barbarity of the Ethiopians, that the evil spirits in these compositions are always represented by the softer sex, generally showing their naughtiness by exhibiting their tongues. The church painter goes so far as to question the gallantry of St. George, the Abyssinian patron saint, by depicting that warrior, instead of doing battle with the dragon, as spearing the graceful, undulating form of a long-tongued woman.

The Abyssinian has a singular superstition regarding eating in the open. To him a fit of indigestion from over-feeding would mean the evil eye. He would feel assured that some part of the performance of appeasing his appetite had been observed. In walking along a highway in this country, I came across what appeared to be a large bundle of washing just a little off the road. On approaching it, the movement going on within was plainly discernible. Covered up in their *shemas*, or cloths, were three men eating their midday meal. So much in fear are the people of the evil eye, that they carry amulets containing prayers, and rolls of parchment several yards long; and pictures illustrative of the triumphs of the good spirit over that ocular absurdity are kept in their houses for protection. If an Abyssinian sells you anything, and is well inclined, he will caution you to keep it indoors or covered up; for if an evil eye should fall on your purchase it may spoil or disappear, which latter contingency is much more probable in Abyssinia. I had some experiences of the kind of evil eye that caused goods and chattels to disappear. It gleamed for an instance in the head of an Ethiopian whom I caught walking off with

some dollars from a pile in our paymaster's tent; the corner of the evil eye smiled innocently when detected, but the smile faded away under the influence of the paymaster's boot.

On the return of Ras Alula from his visit to the King, we certainly fared a little better, and our envoy was offered a house, with a compound wherein to pitch his tents. We had already settled down comfortably about a quarter of a mile from the city, in a southeasterly direction. Our encampment numbered twenty tents, and Mason Bey, with his equatorial experience, erected several excellent grass huts, so that we were in comparative comfort and protected from the sun, the rays of which at this early period of the season were quite hot enough. The huts brought the temperature during the day down to 87°, and kept it up to 47° of a night, for after sundown the thermometer falls rapidly from 110° to 45°.

Rather interested to learn how far Abyssinian hospitality would go in the way of a house, we rode into the town one afternoon to view the King's gift. After threading our way through several narrow streets, we arrived at the outer wall of the mansion. Passing through the gateway, we crossed the compound, which had the appearance of a scattered dunghill, and reached a tall, quadrangular-shaped building, composed of thick walls of mud and stones, with an extinguisher-shaped thatched roof. Three doors, one on each face of three of the walls, opened into a hall. Entering through the center, we discovered on each side of the gangway the head of a mule protruding from two narrow stables let into the wall. The animals were so close that they rubbed their noses on our coat-sleeves and sniffed our pockets for grain. In a recess fronting the entrance was a dais a few feet high, built of mud, covered with a carpet and some straw, with a dirty curtain stretching across the recess and overhanging the dais. This is where the lord of the house would place himself to receive visitors, or to recline after a feast. There was also a native bedstead, a low four-post affair, with strips of rawhide stretching from side to side. This, with the exception of a stool, was the only other article of furniture in the place. The floor was very much like that of an ill-kept stable, covered with muck and frowzy straw. Besides a woman and her little baby, both lately greased and fragrant in the extreme, there were a goat and a few fat-tailed sheep. From numerous holes and open cupboards in the walls fowls cackled and pigeons fluttered, disturbing the cobwebs, and spattering the occupants below with lime. Scattered here and there in corners were tedge-horns, broken honey-pots, and debris of all descriptions. The scene was indeed novel, but not entertaining, for the stench of the animals, and

the multitudes of flies and bees attracted by the honey-pots, made us think of moving. The chief of our escort, not seeing, as he expected, the pleasure depicted on our envoy's face, told him that there was a still better room above, where he could receive his friends in quietude and make a perfect little sanctum. We looked around in some surprise, for no signs of a stairway were visible. One of the servants smiled upon us with a certain touch of contempt, and, jumping on the dais, seemed to crawl up the wall like a cat, disappearing through a hole, out of which he eventually looked down upon us, expecting the envoy to follow. Whether the Queen's representative thought it, in virtue of his position, beneath his dignity to go through these gymnastics, or whether he thought his days of cadet-like agility had passed away, he did not accept the invitation to explore further the wonders of the place, but returned to his camp, leaving this abode of Abyssinian hospitality to the original occupants.

Abyssinia is a country where, if marriage is a failure, it can be easily dissolved. There is absolutely no legal or holy tie. When a man is desirous of marrying a girl he directly applies to her parents. The maidens, like those in many European countries, are seldom consulted on the question; the lover arranging with the father or male relatives regarding her dower, which generally means a few beeves, sheep, or pieces of cloth, and sometimes gold. On the marriage day the bridegroom presents himself with his best man at the house of his future father-in-law. Much feasting goes on till the bride is carried off by her husband, generally on his shoulders, while the male relatives closely follow, making a canopy of their togas to keep off the rays of the sun, or perhaps the effects of the evil eye. Behind come a crowd of young girls and boys, methodically lifting their arms above their heads, and clapping their hands to the measured beating of tom-toms carried by men running along the flanks of the procession, who also blow long trumpets. The happy couple that I saw married outstripped their followers, with the exception of their best man, and at last reached the town green, where the groomsmen formed a screen with their cloaks round the happy pair, when the deferred courtship began. It is a custom for the supporters of the groom, generally six in number, to be present on this occasion, and for many days afterward to go round visiting the houses of the mutual friends of the married pair, extolling the beauties of the bride and the accomplishments of the groom, generally finishing up with a grotesque dance, which is much enjoyed by the enthusiastic neighbors, crowding round the open doorway. Though this marriage can be annulled according to

mutual agreement of bride and groom, if, after years of happiness together, they wish to cement the tie more closely, the pair simply attend the holy communion together in church, and the marriage is then looked upon as indissoluble.

There is a touch of the old Roman "Mark-Antony-over-the-body-of-Cæsar" custom about Abyssinian burials. The corpse is brought from the house of death to some prominent clearing in the town, where the women relatives and hired mourners sit around in a circle, lowly chanting some weird dirge. The chief mourner in the case that I saw, the mother of a child, stood upright over the little body, which with exposed face lay on a stretcher. With loud lamentations she beat her breast, tore her hair, bewailing her loss; presently in softer tones she extolled the perfections of her lost one. Then she raved again, growing more and more frantic every moment, till her slave entwined her arms about her mistress and led her sorrowing away. After that the men, who had been standing all the time at a respectful distance, came in and bore the body of the child to the burial-place, the women returning to the house to prepare a feast for the male mourners' return.

We found that in many parts of the town of Adowa we were looked upon with the greatest horror by the womankind. In passing down a narrow street the women would keep close to the walls, turning their backs on us and whispering, "O you creatures with pink skins!" Throughout Abyssinia, cloth, colored pieces of handkerchiefs, and bars of rock-salt ten inches long, serve as the ordinary medium of barter. The only coin in the country is the Marie-Thérèse silver dollar. Twenty-four bars of salt go to the dollar, therefore I always avoided changing dollars, and for small wants got on well by trading empty beer-bottles, of which we were always adding to our supply, getting for each two chickens and a dozen eggs. Worcester-shire-sauce bottles ran higher because of their glass stoppers. If I had felt inclined to settle in that country, I could have taken a chief's daughter in marriage, in spite of my green eyes and pink skin, on account of a large cut-glass cologne bottle, with a bulbous glass stopper, that I happened to have with me.

When King Johannes eventually came to meet us, for many hours before the advance-guard of his army appeared on the hills overlooking Adowa the forty royal speaking-drums were sounding his advent in measured beatings, which could be heard for miles. Throughout Africa the drum has been the long-distance telephone of the natives from time immemorial, for they literally speak with their drums.

Mr. Glave, who has recently returned from the tributaries of the Upper Congo, tells remarkable stories of what this drumming can do in that part of the country.

In Abyssinia taxes are collected by the sound of the drum, and woe betide the tardy husbandman if his beeves, sheep, or bread are not forthcoming. "Slay—spare not!" roll the distant thunder of the king's drums, and the cavalry collectors swoop down on the village. The low, deep sound of the tom-tom has a weirdness about its tone which is highly effective, certainly to those not subjects of the King; and in the morning in the silent darkness the drums signaled the coming of Johannes. It was an exceedingly grateful sound to us, for we had been virtually prisoners, anxiously awaiting his arrival. The morning light was well on the hills as the advance-guard of the King descended into our valley. First came irregular cavalry, who scattered over the uneven ground without any particular order or formation. Then in a compact body came the Abuna and other church dignitaries, with a choir of boys in their front, chanting. At an interval of a few yards rode the King, dressed in a black silk gabardine, bareheaded and barefooted, mounted on a mule richly caparisoned with silver and red leather. A large magenta silk umbrella was held over his head by a page running by his side. At a respectful distance, to prevent the pressure of his unruly subjects, were footmen marching in Indian file at short intervals. The King's son rode beside his royal father, also mounted on a mule. The rear was brought up by the army, infantry and cavalry all huddled together, fighting their way to the front so that they could get a better view of the arrival at the palace. The palace—if the three huts which constitute the king's residence can be called one—is perched in a walled compound on one of the highest hills looking down on Adowa. The courtyard is entered by one narrow gateway, with a signal-tower above it. On each side of it two seven-pounders, presented by the Admiral to the King, had been placed the night before. At the last moment Ras Alula was struck with the brilliant idea of firing a salute in honor of his monarch's entrance into Adowa, so he hurriedly sent down to our camp for the necessary men and blank charges. When our scratch crew arrived the people were too excited to pay any attention to the order to stand clear of the guns, and with great difficulty six rounds at very varied intervals were got off, to the astonishment of the crowd, who rushed about after each round in great wonderment, some warriors riding up flourishing their spears at the mouth of the ordnance. What these intrepid warriors could not understand was the

sponging out of the guns after each discharge. They thought this part of the function unnecessary delay. It was lucky, after all, that Ras Alula sent for our men to work the pieces.

The camp-followers with the baggage now made their appearance in large numbers, and tents of all descriptions were soon pitched up hill and down dale, the beasts of burden making for the fields and eating up the grass like locusts. The inhabitants of Adowa had been brewing tedge and making bread for the last three weeks, but how they were to provide for this inroad of 7000 warriors and their animals was quite a puzzle. The King's hospitality toward us began that evening, much to the delight of our servants, for two oxen, several sheep, 500 loaves of bread, many jars of tedge and honey, and a few horns of red pepper were brought into camp by the royal slaves. This quantity became our daily allowance while we were guests of Adowa.

The interior of the royal residence had nothing to recommend it above other native interiors. The walls were of plain mud, and of stone unevenly fitted, and without any attempt at decorative art, and not even draped with cotton cloth, as some are. The earthen floor was bare, with the exception of a few well-worn pieces of Brussels carpet, leading from the entrance up to the foot of what served for a throne. There was no attempt at state; a few domestics lolled against the walls, and on the left side of the throne stood a priest, whose seeming occupation was to keep the flies from his own nose with the aid of a piece of cow's tail, but in reality, and in conjunction with a servant swaying a horse-hair switch, was keeping those little torments from feeding off the butter on the royal head; for his Majesty indulged in grease as well as his lowly subjects. The Negus squatted in the middle of his throne, his body totally covered from tip of nose downward, to show his dignity, pride, and exalted position, and the utter indifference he felt to everything and everybody else. And thus he remained till our numerous presents were brought in and placed at his feet, when he even condescended to smile his thanks, which lighted up his otherwise gloomy face and made it rather pleasant. It is lean and wan, broad just over the brows, which are perfectly arched; his large black eyes are deep-set; his nose is slightly Jewish, but small; and his mouth and chin—for he now gradually dropped his toga, which fell slowly down over his knees, discovering the order of Solomon in gold, attached to a chain around his neck, glittering on a gown of black silk—showed a weakness that belied the upper part of the face. His color is almost negro in its blackness. There appeared to be no one in

particular to keep the door or to lift the cloth as one entered or passed out. When we did the latter,— after asking permission to depart, which the King cheerfully responded to by saying, “Echee,” which means in plain English “All right,”— we had to move the cloth for ourselves. Once out of the royal presence, an unruly mob of soldiers and servants jostled us wherever we walked. Sometimes an indignant chief would lay about him with a stiff bamboo, clearing our way for a time, but the people were like flies; their appetite for curiosity seemed all the more sharpened, and they swarmed around in large numbers. In a corner of the compound I noticed that a large bower had been erected to cover with its leafy shade at least 500 men. This was where the warriors, chiefs, and courtiers of the King feasted. We were none of us invited during our stay to these entertainments, Johannes knowing full well that Europeans are not accustomed to the luxuries of an Abyssinian banquet; and for one, I was heartily glad we were not honored with this mark of his favor. The food was, as usual, warm raw flesh, with a sort of haggis of

intestines of the animal, flavored with ox-gall and red pepper, to make it more piquant.

The Abyssinian soldier is generally a frugal creature; on the war-path he has to put up with rations of jerked beef and a little flour, which he carries slung over his shoulders tied up in an end of his toga. A slab of stone will serve whereon to mix the flour with a little water, the quality of which he is not particular about. He will then make a paste; a fairly round stone is sought for and heated in the camp-fire, and is then used as a center around which the dough is built. This stone dumping is then placed in hot ashes, and in a few moments is cooked sufficiently to serve as bread. Red pepper made into a paste with grease is carried in a small horn attached to his girdle. Of luxuries the Abyssinian soldiers have few. Smoking is not allowed, and the breaker of this rule is liable to lose his nose and lips in punishment. Each man carries his little pot of snuff in his belt. A short time after the coming of the King we returned to the coast, and our mission was ended.

Frederic Villiers.



A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.



CHRISTIE was very small, even for his tender years, and he had red hair and the freckles that always go with it. As far back as Christie could remember he had sold newspapers on the streets. The experience he had gained in this line was a very extensive one, and had completely destroyed any ideas he might otherwise have had of a domestic life. For the last few summers he had given up the paper business, and blackened boots on a ferry-boat. He might have done very well at this, but he preferred to sit on the deck and listen to the three Italians who played popular airs on a harp and two violins. On the last few trips Christie would generally find that he had no money to pay for his supper and lodging, so he would get down to work and try to make enough to keep him until the following day.

He was a very improvident character, was Christie, but he had no one depending on him,

so it really did not make very much difference. It frequently happened that when night came on he found himself without any money at all. On these occasions he would spend the night at a shed on a pier in the East River.

Christie was a great favorite with the watchman at the pier, and the old man was always rather glad when the boy had had a bad day and was forced to spend the night in the shed, for Christie was very good company, and sat up until late at night telling the old man of his day's adventures, and making plans, and getting advice for the future. Young as he was, Christie had seen more of New York than most men of forty. He knew the Bowery and the East Side, every bit of it. As for the other side of the town, he did not care for it; his ambitions did not lie in that direction. He had already tired of New York, and wanted to get out in the world and travel from place to place. He was an enthusiastic admirer of the country and the water; and the little green parks of the metropolis, and even the waters of the bay, did not afford him sufficient of either. He was a